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## Profile of an Affiliate

**"Speech should be taught to all individuals for whom it is functionally feasible. For others we should design viable alternatives so that they may enjoy the benefits of communication, enhance cognitive development, extend social participation and eventually strengthen their economic well-being".**

**Richard L. Schiefelbusch, Ph.D.**

For the volunteer membership of the most easterly Canadian Affiliate, the Blissymbolic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (B.A.N.A.L.), the words of Richard L. Schiefelbusch express the objectives that have motivated their organization since its inception.

Jane Green, as a founding member and President of B.A.N.A.L. was in Toronto recently. From her we learned of some of the work, this three year old Association has undertaken.

The beginnings are not unusual, it is the way many who want to affiliate start. Three colleagues, working with non-speaking children journeyed to Toronto to take the Elementary Training in Blissymbolics. They returned to St. John's and proceeded to put their new found knowledge and skills to work. Interest and enquiries grew, as positive results became visible to parents, and other professionals involved with non-speaking children. So much so, that Jane Green and her two colleagues asked for assistance in hosting a Workshop in the area. A team from BCI travelled to St. John's and acted as facilitators and Senior presentors in the first workshop co-ordinated by the

original three initiates. The symbol programme had received so much acceptance that by 1981, between 120-130 persons had undertaken training. And to-day Blissymbolic instruction is being received by at least 50 children enrolled in Special Education classes in the regular school or special school programme. As well, many other children who do not have access to instruction locally, are communicating and learning in remote regions of the area.

Last year, during the International Year of the Disabled Persons, the local council, awarded a grant of \$2,500.00 to B.A.N.A.L. in support of the work of the Association. With this money, three programmes are underway. A symbol user is employed to assist in workshops and paid a small salary. A Newsletter now goes out to the regional membership. And a Brochure has just been completed to inform the general population of the Blissymbol System and the Association.

As well as these projects, the Association plans to compile resource material for distribution throughout the region. The place chosen is the HUB, a community resource centre for the physically handicapped. This choice, according to Jane, overcomes some of the limitations that housing a resource centre in a school, hospital or governmental institution poses. It allows greater numbers access to the material.

### **"Support for the parents"**

Accessibility, although not unique to this region, is a perennial problem. It surfaces, usually when the association hears of a

parent who would like to attend a workshop, but travelling from a remote region and arranging child-care for all the children, including the one with special needs, is too great an obstacle. So that parents need not be denied support, B.A.N.A.L. has applied for funds to do a survey in order to assess the needs of parents and symbol users. While the results should help the various education, health, social and government services to play their part more effectively, the Association, "will continue to play its part in keeping in touch with symbol users, parents, and instructors". According to Jane Green, the goal is to have a regional register, to assist the various other organizations to keep in touch and follow through on initial Blissymbol programmes.

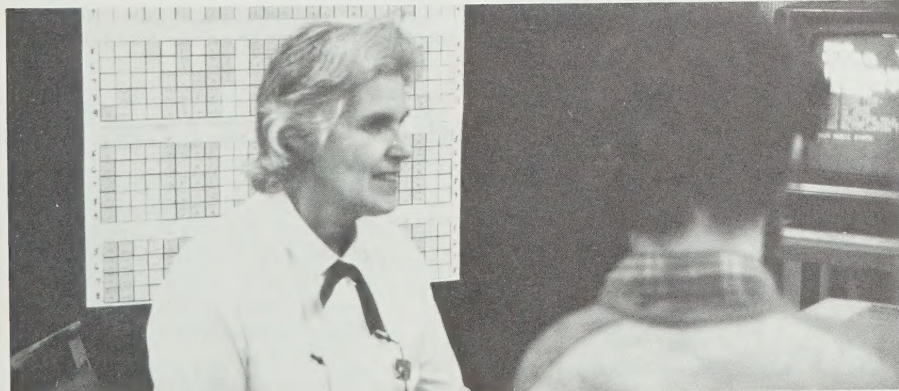
### **"The camp blossomed"**

Concern for providing support for parents, apparent in this commitment is also evident when Jane recalls anecdotes about the two camps that B.A.N.A.L. was instrumental in providing this past year.

Provision was made for non-speaking symbol users to invite a speaking friend to share the camp experience. "The camp blossomed with symbol signs. Puns and jokes appeared as if by magic in response to an invitation to be creative in how to use symbols", recalls Jane.

"Well, it's a beginning". This modest appraisal by Jane of the work of the Association speaks to the future. A future that Janes hopes will see: an increased membership base as other professional groups, such as Librarians, are invited to join; continued support for parents, symbol users and instructors as the Registry becomes a reality; offering Elementary as well as Refresher Workshops; and the implementation of the recommendations they expect from the survey.

We at BCI applaud the efforts of Jane Green and her colleagues for undertaking a task that at times is tedious, frustrating and discouraging. By affirming that *non-speaking children can learn*, they encourage all of us to remember those early break-throughs in communication and help us in our resolve to continue to offer the support and encouragement that is within our abilities.



*Jane Green assists in assessment process for ACS.*

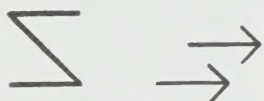






# Late but not forgotten . . .

## Blissymbol Competition



The *Vocabulary Display Contest of 1979* confirmed our knowledge that there are many creative, innovative individuals among our readers. The entries showed considerable diversity in organization and format and displayed uniqueness in adaptation to meet the individual needs of users. So much so, that the evaluators found it impossible to select a standard display for any category. You will recall, the original intent of the contest was to involve our readers in arriving at "standard vocabularies to meet the needs of various groupings of Blissymbol users".

The evaluators, were able to identify many common positive features that can be adapted by instructors in creating displays for their students. Generally the strengths were:

- inclusion of essential information such as student's name, Special Blissymbol Block, Help Me communication Block and peer names.

- broad and relevant vocabulary base
- attractive and useful layout
- provision for expansion and individualization
- organizing through logical groupings and meaningful categories.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of the task, the evaluators and Contest co-ordinators found the Contest project, an exciting

learning experience, valuable in establishing evaluating criteria, and useful for further studies regarding standard displays and vocabulary development. The recommendation was to give special recognition to several entries.

Therefore, the Blissymbolics Communication Institute is pleased to announce TWO WINNERS!!

**Shelley Miller-Deegan**, speech pathologist, formerly of Chedoke Centre, Hamilton, Ontario; now with Lincoln Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin, for her entry — a standard display for a retarded, pointing, school age student.

**Barbara Rush**, Special Education teacher, formerly with Hamilton District Society for Crippled Children, Cerebral Palsy Centre, now resource Teacher with the Hamilton Board of Education, for her entry — an eye-coded display for a young adult with borderline I.Q.

**HONORABLE MENTION** — **Lynn Shogan**, Northwest Wayne Skill Center, 34401 Pinetree Livonia, Michigan, U.S.A. 48150, for her entry — a display for retarded pointing teens and young adults.

Shelley and Barbara will each receive a life-time subscription to the BULLETIN and the Newsletter. As well, all three will receive a symbol pin and a copy of Elizabeth Helfman's book, *Blissymbolics: Speaking without speech*.

The winning vocabulary displays will be shown in the Augmentative Communication Services to visitors to ACS and BCI. Also, they will be included on the display table at Toronto, BCI Training programmes.

The Contest project co-ordinators, Shirley McNaughton, Lynette Norris, Penny Parnes and Nora Rothschild extend their sincere thanks to *all* those who submitted entries and to the evaluators for the careful study they gave to each entry and the detailing of valuable comments. Some of these are included in this Bulletin.

## Symbol Office Changes

Since the advent of the new year, there have been many changes occurring in the Symbol Office. Even the walls have moved!

Jinny Storr, Symbol Officer, has reduced her work time to one day a week, and now serves as consultant to the Symbol Office and as interim co-ordinator of the International Symbol Panel. She will be directing her attention to matters relating to the development of Blissymbols and will be collating information and suggestions for the attention of the International Panel. In this regard, and at the request of the Swedish Representatives on the Nordic Blissymbolics Committee, Jinny worked in Sweden during the first week in February. We are pleased that Jinny has agreed to concentrate her time on system development, and on concerns across different language groups using Blissymbols with communicatively impaired populations. Jinny's extensive knowledge and background in Blissymbols will continue to be a valuable source of information and support to the Symbol Office.

Paula Ashmead, as Symbol Office Co-ordinator, is now responsible for the day to day activities of the Symbol Office and

for the approval of printed presentations of the standard Blissymbols as they appear in *Blissymbols for Use*. This is an enormous undertaking, that grows with the increasing awareness and use of Blissymbolics. To assist Paula in meeting the demands for this service, Lynn Anderson has joined the staff of BCI serving as secretary to both the Symbol Office Co-ordinator and the Co-ordinator of Marketing and Distributing. This promises

to be a job with very few quiet times!

In order for the Symbol Office to continue to provide symbols as required in publications and materials it has become necessary to institute a fee for service. The fee varies with the type of work undertaken and with the application for which the work is required. Details regarding cost estimates and applications which are exempt from a fee can be obtained from Paula Ashmead.

## Evaluation of Displays

For those who are involved in designing display boards the following suggestions from the evaluators of the *Vocabulary Display Contest* may prove to be worthwhile:

- regardless of size of the vocabulary, spaces should always be left to allow the user to add on symbols as required.
- special Blissymbols should be introduced early in a Blissymbol instructional programme, e.g. questions, opposite meaning; similar to.
- full names or pictures of friends and family members are preferable to the general symbol following by the initial consonant (unless there is a special reason

for introducing the latter).

- *yes* and *no* symbols should remain in the position in which they were initially introduced with *No* (which includes negative sign) at left side of display and *Yes* (which includes positive sign) at the right side of the display.

- use of the English alphabetical order to arrange symbols is not recommended (unless for a special teaching objective).

- the *listener* deserves strong consideration and provision must be made on the display to ensure that the listener understands his/her role in the communication.

- in evaluating a display give consideration to the following areas: vocabulary selection, vocabulary expansion capabilities, and vocabulary layout of the display; the cognitive and language capabilities and needs of the user.



## From the editor

When I receive the material from the contributors, prior to publication, I look for a common thread running throughout in order to give some focus to each issue. The material this time without a conscious directive, seems to be emphasizing "normalizing experiences".

This is not unusual, given the kind of people that are involved in the augmenting of communications through the use of the Blissymbolic system. However, it is encouraging. A great deal of time, energy and money has been expended in attempts to "normalize" behaviour that has been contaminative of the way in which people grow and develop. With our present understanding of what a human being is, the future indeed, holds promise for what we yet might become.

Frustration is certainly a "normal" ex-

perience for all of us. In this BULLETIN you will find a new column that is focused on alleviating some of the pain of unnecessary frustration and/or of "re-inventing the wheel". HELPFUL HINTS, an idea submitted by the Augmentative Communications Services, will share concrete suggestions that include generally useful ideas, tips and hints. These have evolved through trial and error and been tested in the daily interaction within particular Blissymbolic systems environments.

If "pictures are worth a thousand words" then Blissymbolic cartoonists have an assured place in the BULLETIN. L'Etape, Journal de l'Association de paralysie cérébrale du Québec Inc., kindly gave permission to reproduce the following:



## Highlights

Celebrations that note our culture, tradition and heritage give continuity and identity to our lives and an appreciation of our past. Many who have been denied the opportunity to celebrate their passages within their own communities, are finding that this is changing.

Recently many staff members of BCI had the distinct pleasure of attending an event that marked the entry of a long-time Bliss user into his community. With the support and encouragement of the *Bliss Club of Leonard Mayzel, Ontario Lodge of the Canadian B'nai Brith, Bruce Rubenstein celebrated his Bar Mitzvah with the B'nai Torah Congregation* in January of this year. To mark the occasion, Bruce was presented with an electric wheelchair by the members of the Leonard Mayzel Lodge. Congratulations Bruce, and to all those who helped to make your day a very special one.

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BCI had an interesting call recently. It seems that a man found a Bliss Board in a local market. As well as wanting to locate the owner, he was intrigued with the symbols. The owner was traced through the office, and we gained a new convert to the Blissymbolic system. Shirley McNaughton took the call, and reported it as a highlight of her day.

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We don't think it was the same person who lost their Bliss Board in the Toronto suburbs, but a Detroit radio station host was a bit non-plussed when a young caller phoned in just before Christmas and asked for a new Bliss Board from Santa. This was one of the most unusual requests he had ever received.

## Volume 7, No. 1

The Bulletin was first published in 1976 and was designated Volume 1, No. 1. Allowing one Volume per year, the 1981 Bulletin should have been labelled Volume 6. Alas, the gremlins interfered and the 1981 Bulletin bore the label Volume 1. As we are now starting 1982, we wish to get back on the right track, so the issues published this year will be Volume 7, No. 1-4.

## Second Edition

*Blissymbols for Preschool Children*, by Anne Warrick (1978) has proven to be an indispensable handbook for parents and professionals alike. This has now been updated with references and Blissymbols to meet 1982 standards. It contains information on assessment, initiating a programme, teaching symbols through arts and crafts etc. It is sure to be a source of assistance and encouragement to those who are involved in introducing Blissymbols to the very young and not so young. Available: BCI, \$6.00.

## Staff up-date

New faces at BCI include Geb Verburg, who began his research study on Blissymbol Acquisition by Physically Disabled and Able Persons of Low Intellectual Levels. This study is funded for six months by The Conn Smythe Research Foundation. Diane Smith is working half time for Geb providing secretarial services.

Many of you are acquainted with Mary Durgy who was our Information Coordinator for several years. Last summer she had an unfortunate boating accident and was forced to resign. We are delighted that she is now well enough to be back two afternoons a week with the Augmentative Communication Service.

Lynne Anderson joined us recently as secretary; half time with the Symbol Office and half time with the Communications and Instructional Materials Dept.



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The Bulletin is a publication for the staff and associate members of the Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

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